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Guaranteed Opposition

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Acts 5:29-42

Chapter 5 begins with the story of Ananias and Saphira and their subsequent deaths. They warn us about the wages of sin and the necessity of purity in the church. We tend to focus on the perceived harshness of God's immediate death sentence upon them rather than considering the mercy of God in not immediately sentencing us all.

Following the burial of the two deceivers, the apostles were again teaching and performing miracles on the Temple Mount (Acts 5:12). Specifically in Solomon's Portico (this was a place designated for public teaching by the rabbis).

As a Christian, where do we come off track? The most obvious answer is we lack the focus on the mission God has assigned us. That mission is to "preach (speak) the gospel" and leave the results in His hands. Our mission is not to campaign for social justice, political change, or social interaction; it is to speak the Gospel. Further, the church's mission is to mature the saints through preaching the Word, fellowshiping with believers, and discipleship in conjunction with praise and worship of God. (2 Timothy 3:12).

The church in Jerusalem understood the mission God had given and embraced it wholeheartedly.

Jesus stated it clearly after His resurrection in Matthew 28:19–20, *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"

Jesus set the example for us to follow as believers in Christ, Luke 19:10, *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*"

Jesus stated it moments before His ascension as his last words to the apostles, Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

The Church and the apostles carried out His instructions, Acts 5:14, *And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,*

I. The Unity in the Church (Acts 5:12-16)

- A. **Through purity** (Acts 5:12b-14) (It is sin that divides and righteousness that unites)
 - 1. In the first 11 verses of Chapter 5, The Church faces opposition from the inside.
 - 2. In the balance of the chapter, the Church faces opposition from the outside.
 - 3. *"If you've never experienced opposition to your ministry – whether you teach Sunday School or serve Jesus through your career – then it could be something wrong with your approach."*¹
 - 4. If you decide to live out your faith publicly, prepare for passive and active opposition.
- B. **By Power** (Acts 5:12a, 15-16)
 - 1. Signs and wonders always pointed lost men to spiritual truth.
 - 2. Signs and wonders confirmed the apostles' claim to be God's messengers.
 - 3. In verse 16, it can be noted the message for the first time spread beyond Jerusalem.
- C. **With Persecution** (Acts 5:17-28)

II. The Proclamation by Peter (Acts 5:29-32)

- A. **The demand of the proclamation (5:29a)**
 - 1. Obedience to God
 - a) Daniel obeyed God rather than Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 1:8, 6:10, 23)
 - b) Ruth obeyed God rather than Naomi (Ruth 1:17-18)
 - 2. Rather than men
 - a) Adam listened to Eve (Genesis 3:17)
 - b) Saul feared the people (Samuel 15:24)

¹ Merida, Tony. *Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017. (77).

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- c) The religious elite taught the commandments of men rejecting the commandment of God (**Mark 7:7-9**)
 - d) The lost worship a false god believing the “wisdom of men,” rather than the truth of Scripture (**Revelation 14:8-12**)

B. The persistence (repetition) of the proclamation (Acts 5:30-32)

- 1. **Acts 2:23–24**, *This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*
- 2. **Acts 3:13–15**, *The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. 14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.*
- 3. **Acts 4:10**, *Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.*

C. The provocative accusation (Acts 5:30)

- 1. Peter consistently accuses the men of the Sanhedrin of the murder of the Son of God.
- 2. “*whom you killed*,” – *diacheirizō* – to kill, the picture is of seizing someone with your hands and killing them. (used one other time in Acts 26:21)
- 3. The only thing we bring to God for our salvation is the sin that demands payment.

D. The Undenied Victory (Acts 5:31, 32)

- 1. God exalted him (raised, lifted, resurrected)
 - a) As Leader (Ruler, Prince) – Understood to be the one with the primacy of authority
 - b) As Savior
- 2. The saved are described as those who obey Him (Acts 5:32) (Romans 1:5; Hebrews 5:9). Obedience does not produce salvation; however, salvation produces obedience!
- 3. The Holy Spirit is given to every saved person at their new birth.

III. The Unbeliever’s Reaction (Acts 5:33-42)

A. Violent Hostility (Acts 5:33)

- 1. Enraged – To be violently emotionally affected; being cut in half by a saw. (Acts 7:54, the stoning of Stephen). **Hebrews 4:12**, *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*
- 2. Why were they enraged (Paul suffered the same hostility; Acts 9:22-23)
 - a) Denial of the doctrine of no resurrection
 - b) Defied the Sanhedrin’s prior order
 - c) Charging the Sanhedrin with the murder of the Messiah.
 - d) The large number of conversions affected their domination of the people

B. Tolerant Indecision (Acts 5:34-43)

C. Saving Acceptance (Acts 5:41-42)

“According to Cornelius a Lapide, Thomas Aquinas once called on Pope Innocent II when the latter was counting out a large sum of money, “You see Thomas,” said the Pope, “the church can no longer say, ‘Silver and gold have I none.’” “True, holy father,” was the reply; “neither can she now say, ‘Rise and walk.’” The moral of this tale may be pondered by any Christian body that enjoys a fair degree of temporal prosperity.” **FF Bruce, *The Book of Acts*,**

Through Peter and the Church in Jerusalem, God sent the message of salvation to the “Jew first.” The command and invitation were simple: “Repent and believe the gospel...” Many did. However, some, including the religious elite (priests, captain of the temple guard, and Sadducees (who did not believe in any resurrection)), became angry, vexed, and irked. Their anger drove them to lay hands on Peter and John and put them in jail! However, many (5000 men) believed the message (word) of Peter.